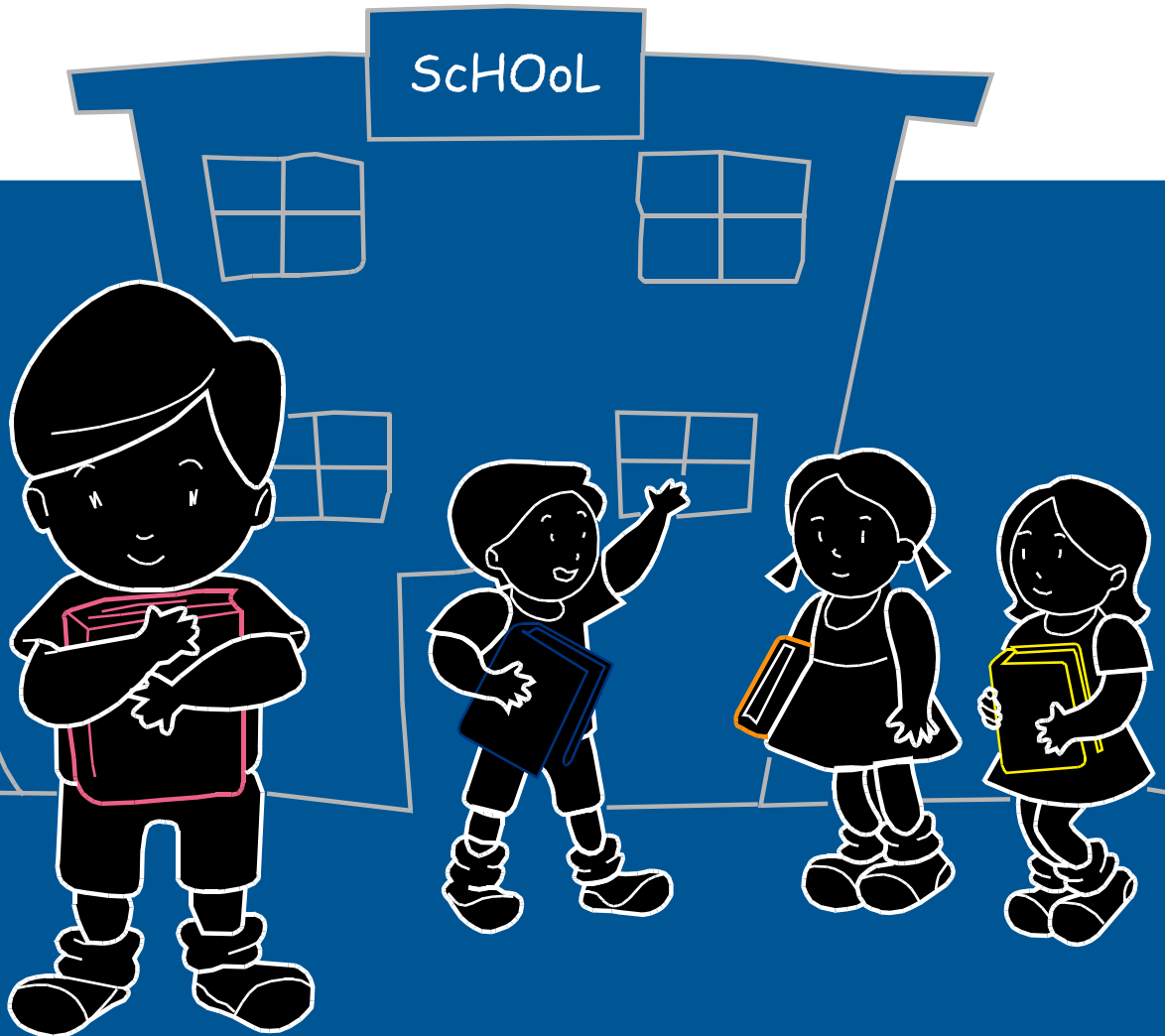


Ilm o Amal

A bi-annual education resource brought to you by TRC

July 2005

Vol 1, Issue 2



ISSUE FOCUS

Back to School

Ideas and activities designed to help you start off the school year on the right foot.



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Dear Readers,

Hello, and welcome back to the Welcome Back edition of *Ilm o Amal*! The start of the new school year is a challenge for everyone. Because this is such an important time of year, we decided to dedicate this issue to *Back to School ideas*. By distributing the edition well in advance, we hope that you will have ample time to absorb some of these ideas over the summer and think about how to apply them when the new term arrives. The lead article entitled "Getting Off to a Good Start" outlines many key strategies for approaching the new year. Written by teachers for teachers, we believe you will find it relevant and helpful.

Throughout the rest of the issue, you will find activities to support the lead article. Ice breakers that will help you and the students get to know each other; guidelines for welcome assemblies; and bulletin board ideas to decorate the classroom. Some of these activities can be photocopied and used directly, or modified to fit your needs. We have also included a section on the importance of Inclusive Education, and ways to make the most of class field trips. Although these aren't necessarily *Back to School* issues, we feel that they are important to keep in mind when you are planning your year.

Finally, we love getting feedback from those of you who found our articles and activities helpful. We have started a new section at the beginning of our edition to publish letters we have received, so please send us your thoughts and comments. We would also welcome any articles, activities or other submissions toward the next issue, the focus of which will be connecting students with Karachi and developing a sense of civic pride for the city and its environment.

We want you to be a part of this publication, so send us any ideas you might have.

The Editors

Letters from our Readers


Ms. Seema Malik,
Director, TRC

SUBJECT: Expressions about IIm-o-Amal

TRC's latest publication, "IIm-o-Amal" is in circulation now, and has been distributed to many schools of the Local Bodies Wing.

The activities and the contents of this edition are very effective and useful for children and teachers. The children are able to participate in these activities and are enjoying them very much. There is an improvement in their skills.

As always, I look forward to your co-operation.


(SHAHIDA NAREED)
ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER
EDUCATION LIAQUATABAD TOWN
(LOCAL BODIES WING) C.D.G.K.

Thank you for your kind response. It is fantastic to hear that the children are enjoying the activities of our last issue. We are always trying to provide more meaningful activities, so we'd love to hear which activities best suit the needs of the Local Bodies Wing Schools.

Date: Thu, 10 Feb 2005
From: Stella Jafri
Subject: IIm O Amal
To: Seema Malik <trc@cyber.net.pk>

Dear Seema,

Thanks for Vol 1 Issue 1 of IIm O Amal and may there be thousands more!

A wonderful effort - what's the marketing strategy? Is someone going to do a review for the literary supplement of Dawn?

Regards,

Stella

As you know, we provide IIm O Amal to all of our member schools free of charge. However, if you have any marketing ideas for us, we'd be more than happy to hear them!

Dear Miss Malik,

The publication was quite interesting, informative and helpful. The three main issues of "Homework", "Cooperative Learning" and "Violence in Entertainment" were thought provoking and enlightening. It is commendable that IIm-O-Amal has brought out the need for close cooperation between teachers and parents to benefit the pupils.

However, some of the activities mentioned cannot be implemented in their totality and therefore have to be adapted according to the requirement and workload of teachers and students alike.

It would be highly appreciated if the next issue contains articles on behavioral patterns and the importance of co-curricular activities.

IIm-O-Amal highlights the problems faced by teachers, students and parents in the learning process, and at the same times suggests possible ways to overcome them. It is an invaluable resource for teachers at all levels.

Yours truly,



Z. T. Mavalvala
Principal,

On behalf of the Primary Section, Morning Shift,
Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School

Thank you so much for your appreciation, it's rare that we receive such detailed feedback. We try our best to make all of our activities applicable to most situations.

Unfortunately, we can't always create the best fit for everyone. All of the instructions in our activities should be considered suggestions and be modified to whatever best suits your needs. We'd love to hear about any changes you made to implement our activities so that we can keep those ideas in mind for future issues.

Comments? Questions? Ideas?
Contact us at:
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Karachi - 74400
or via email: info@trconline.org



Getting Off To a Good Start

The early weeks of each new school year offer teachers distinct opportunities and challenges. It is during this time – when expectations and routines are established, rules generated, and goals articulated – that the foundation is laid for a productive and cooperative year of learning. It is important to remember that settling into a new class is not only tricky for the teacher, but for the pupils as well. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to make the start of term run as smoothly as possible. In this article, we will focus on creating a classroom community; developing rules and behaviour; positive communication methods; and establishing home-school links. The details will naturally differ depending on the age group and the content of your curriculum, but with these broad categories in mind, you should be able to meet the challenges of a new year head on.

The Classroom Community

A teacher can communicate an amazing amount just by establishing the right atmosphere in the classroom. Creating a learning climate of comfort and safety involves thinking about the physical layout of the room, as well as the ways you can welcome your students into the room and help them accept it as their own.

Long before the students arrive, you should be thinking about how your classroom will be arranged. Comfortable, well-run classrooms begin with the physical layout. Welcoming, functional rooms encourage

students to enjoy school; they help create the positive first impression that is so critical. Before you begin to arrange your classroom, give the following questions some thought:

- What will be the main types of instructional activities?
- Will it be small groups, whole class discussions, teacher presentations, student presentations, individual assignments, group projects?
- What physical arrangements will best support these activities?
- How much movement around the room will be involved?
- Will students get their own materials or will you distribute them?
- What systems will you have for student routines? (Forming a line; Going to the bathroom; Going for a drink of water)
- How flexible or permanent will the arrangement be?



The answers to these questions are important to consider because the decisions you make will be a large factor in the success of your instructional activities. Your room arrangement communicates to students how you expect them to participate in your class. Desks arranged into groups imply that interaction and collaboration among students is expected. On the other hand, desks arranged in rows indicate that the focus of the classroom is the teacher, the chalkboard, or some other central point.

Regardless of which layout you choose to facilitate your teaching style, when the students arrive, make every effort to help them feel comfortable in the new environment. Help them feel a sense of ownership for the school environment and materials. Encourage independence by organizing the classroom so that every one can easily become familiar with where everything is located. Ensure that the children can manage their own

reading books, stationery, and other supplies. Let them become familiar with everything and allow time for exploration. Through discussion, you can develop guidelines about sharing particular resources and teaching children how to care for them. If students feel involved and responsible for the classroom's materials, they will hopefully develop the same respect they have for their own possessions.

It's important that everyone has been shown around the school and knows the names of key members of the staff. School tours are one way to introduce young students, and new students, to the school surroundings. Older students can be given the responsibility of guiding these tours. Make every effort to encourage students to get acquainted, or reacquainted with the school environment and to feel comfortable in it. Pair children with a friendly partner

Tips for Classroom Arrangement:

- **Keep High Traffic Areas Clear**
Avoid distractions by keeping pathways to the dustbin, blackboard, bookshelf, etc. free from congestion.
- **A Personal Touch**
The room's overall appearance should be attractive and inviting. Give your room some flair with plants, art, rugs, or cozy pillows for the reading corner
- **Keep Supplies Accessible**
Supplies that are used frequently should be easy for students to access to reduce distracting slow-downs.
- **Decorate Your Classroom**
Make use of your wall space! Check out our Bulletin Board Ideas on page 19).

who can answer questions about things that they are unsure about.

As students become comfortable with the physical environment, they also need to become comfortable with their classmates and you. After all, you will all be spending a lot of time together over the course of the year. If you have met the students of your new class, or their previous teacher, you may have some initial impressions of the children. Accessing children's records will enable you to think more about how to approach them, and give you a head start on helping everyone get along. Students can come to know each other and develop a sense of belonging through activities that help them define their commonality and their differences. Deliberately focussing on group-building activities during these initial weeks helps create the trust and safety essential for active, collaborative learning. However, this sense of trust is not built solely on warmth and friendliness. It is also built upon the students' knowledge that there are reasonable limits and boundaries for behavior, and that their teacher will enforce them. They must see that their teacher will exercise vigilance and good judgment to keep everyone safe.

Rules and Behaviour

After establishing the comfort of your students in their new environment, it is important to make the limits and boundaries of that environment clear. The beginning of the school year is an important time for classroom management because your students will learn behaviours, attitudes, and work habits that will affect the rest of the year. To help shape these behaviours and habits, certain rules and procedures need to be planned and taught. It is simply not possible for a teacher to conduct instruction, or for students to work productively if they have no guidelines for how they are to behave. Giving students a clear set of expectations is necessary to establish a positive classroom environment.

A sense of order and predictability in daily school life is important. It enables children to relax, and focus their energy on learning. When we enter a new environment, we want to know its rules so that we feel safe and secure. In the first weeks of school, teachers must make their expectations clear. For example, you could emphasise that "Our room will be a place where people try hard, take good care of themselves and others, and take good care of our materials and our school." Children are then involved in applying these broad, nonnegotiable expectations to everyday situations. For example: "How will we walk through the halls if we are taking care of each other?" or "What will clean-up time look like if we are taking good care of our room?"



1. Respect others.
2. Listen.
3. Take turns.
4. Follow directions.
5. Smile !

It is very important that your students have a clear understanding of your expectations and boundaries, without feeling threatened by the rules. Teachers must explain to students how rules are necessary to create a safe and secure environment for everyone, and that rules make everyone's time at school more enjoyable. It is also important to keep in mind that your students will respect rules more if they have had a hand in creating them. With the help of student involvement, come up with four or five core classroom rules. Keep the rules realistic, clear, and as specific as possible. Also decide, with the class's help, the consequences of breaking these rules. It is often a good idea to display these rules on a board as a reminder to students of their commitment. This can be a fun activity, children can illustrate each rule, using different signs to show actions, warnings and behaviours that are discouraged.

Teach these rules as you would a regular lesson. The time taken at the beginning of the year to establish these guidelines will be invaluable throughout the term. Taking the time to establish the right atmosphere of respect will harbour evident rewards. Make sure to keep things interesting and lively, so that the students do not associate the rules with a teacher's lecture. Discuss each rule individually and carefully, and always explain the reasoning behind it. You might ask for examples of how the rule could be broken, and discuss the consequences that may follow.

Role-playing games are also a great way to involve students in considering the consequences of breaking the rules. For example, to encourage appropriate

playground behaviour, ask the children to create a short play about someone being bullied, being excluded from a game, spoiling a game or playing roughly. Watching and talking about the plays will help to establish a common understanding of what can go wrong and what to do about it within the framework of your school's rules. These short role-playing games can also be used to emphasise other possible scenarios for the beginning of the year, like making a new friend, asking for help, letting others join in, or sharing.

Communication

It is important to open channels of communication with your students before you get down to the real academics. Tell them about yourself and ask about their likes and dislikes. Discuss what you will expect from them, but also ask them what they expect from you as their teacher. Such practices encourage children to trust their teacher. You should always talk to them openly about any problems they might be facing and try to put them at ease. Encourage the children to communicate with each other in the same way.

Do Remember...

Greetings: When students first walk in the door, greet them warmly, help them find their seats and give them a simple activity to get started on.

Lesson Plans: Overplan! Overplan! Overplan! You can never go wrong with too many activities planned. It is much easier not to do an activity than it is to think of one on the spot!

Vary your Activities: Alternate a fun activity with explaining the rules, or other teaching activities. Keep things interesting for the students.

Rules and Procedures: Make sure students understand the rules and the consequences for breaking them. Be firm, fair and consistent in enforcing the rules.

Clear Expectations: Be sure to communicate instructional objectives and expectations clearly and effectively.

Be Flexible: Sometimes things don't go according to plan. Be prepared to make on-the-spot changes. 'Remember the ancient Chinese saying: "Be like a bamboo; bend with the breeze...."'

Form a Relationship: It is important that students trust their teacher. You must work to establish that trust within the first few weeks. Remember to talk to them openly and share all your expectations, so that no one has any false impressions. Be open to any problems they might bring to you.

Encourage the children to provide you with feedback. What teaching and learning strategies helped them? What are their learning and development aims? Think about your professional development. What do you want to achieve by the end of the year? How can you do this?

Students are often intimidated by evaluation. Be sure to be open about these areas as well. Explain the nature and purpose of tests, targets and formative assessment procedures. Help the children to think about what they learned in the previous year, and what they can aim to learn during their first term with you. Stress the importance of home-school links and parental expectations as positive support for the children.

Establishing Home School Links

It is often easy to overlook the importance of establishing home-school links. Parents can be an invaluable resource in your teaching, and the more you involve your students' families, the happier they will be about their children's education. Hold an introduction meeting at the beginning of the year for your new class's parents and follow it up with regular parents' meetings throughout the year. Try to get out and greet parents when the children are arriving and leaving. Get to know them, and the children's siblings, so that if you have to ask to speak to a parent, it isn't threatening, but a common occurrence.

Keeping parents involved is a very simple matter and can be as simple as creating a notice board for parents that is hung in a prominent position. Use it to display important notices, details of upcoming events, and any relevant information you wish to share. Encourage parents to be involved in class-work and outings. You can also invite them to events organised by the children throughout the year such as your open day, sports day and so on.

Conclusions

The first few weeks of school are the most important of the entire year, as this is the time when teachers must

set the tone. In general, make a good impression, keep expectations high, provide success for all, establish yourself as a leader, provide a variety of activities, and communicate a little about who you are and your positive expectations. Learning requires participation and focused effort, thoughtful questions, and the ability to cooperate and collaborate. As teachers it is our job to generate excitement and enthusiasm about the school year, so as to help students achieve these high standards. Hopefully the ideas in this article will help you have a positive first few weeks, and a great year ahead!



Source:

Adapted in part from:

Denton, P. & Kriete, R. (2000). *The First Six Weeks of School*. Northeast Foundation of Children.

First Week Check List

Here is a check list you can use to make sure you are prepared for the first few weeks of class.

- Make bulletin board decisions:
 - where to post announcements and calendar
 - where to post welcome-back displays
 - which boards will be for subject area stress
 - where to display children's work
 - which boards you will let students design
- Set up learning centers
- Make signs and labels for the room
- Prepare class rolls and permanent records
- Make a class list to post on the door
- Make student name tags for desks or have them make their own
- Tentatively group students by mixed ability groups, according to previous records
- Check to see which students may be needing special guidance
- Prepare packets for students to take home the first day. Include:
 - student data forms
 - yearly calendar
 - lunch procedure
 - helper parent volunteer forms
 - school rules
 - bus or transportation rules
 - note to parents(if any)
 - supplies(if any)
- Gather appropriate supplementary materials
- Check out library books
- Write tentative lesson plans for the coming week
- Duplicate materials needed the first few days
- Set up a folder for a substitute to use in case of emergency that includes:
 - daily schedule (fill in as soon as possible)
 - seating chart (fill in as soon as possible)
 - reproducible activities (change monthly)
- Prepare a file for correspondence with parents
- Prepare a file for circulars
- Write your name and other important information on the board
- Make a checklist for returned forms (can be used later for report cards and other items)
- Make a student progress chart / record book
- Make your daily routine chart/timetable.
- Obtain supplies
 - plan books
 - attendance registers
 - paper clips
 - card paper
 - folders
 - different kinds of tape
 - extra writing paper
 - rubber bands
 - stapler and staples
 - handwriting paper
 - straight pins
 - spare pencils/pens
 - tissues
 - markers/paints
 - colour pencils
 - safety pins



Get Acquainted **Activities**

Teachers frequently use "get acquainted activities" as part of their first day plan. Such activities help the children feel that their teacher and the other children know them better and care about them. These activities also help foster a sense of community and trust. In the following pages, you will find activities for all levels, as well as worksheet activities which you can photocopy or modify to suit your needs.

Nametags

Level: Pre-Primary

What to do: Greet the children and get them started on this simple activity. Ask the children to make their own nametags and place them on their desks. As they work, their anxiety and self-consciousness should begin to fall away. Drawing with crayons and writing their names are familiar activities; it is work they can do. In a comfortable atmosphere, with a success-insured task, children begin to feel safe and secure. For very young children the nametags should be pre-made so that they can colour, draw and decorate their nametags.

Photo Wall

Level: Pre- Primary

What to do: Make a photo wall of all the children in the class. You could ask parents to bring in pictures or take your own with the school camera. Children could also be asked to draw their own portraits to be pasted on the wall.

We Couldn't Be Without YOU

Level: Primary

What to do: Make a jigsaw display showing how your class is made up of individuals who all fit together to make a whole. Prepare large letters for your bulletin

board that spell out your grade. For example: GRADE THREE. Cut the letters into the same number of pieces as you have class members. Give each pupil a piece to decorate with things about themselves. Then let them place the pieces on to the bulletin board. Explain to the students that this shows that each person is an important part of the class because we could not be GRADE THREE without YOU.

Me in a bag

Level: Pre-Primary

What to do: Have children bring a paper bag with 3-4 objects, such as books, pictures, or toys that tell something about themselves. Let them use these props to introduce themselves. Give everyone in the class a turn to shine.

Who Am I ? Riddle Book

Level: Primary

What to do: Have pupils share facts about themselves by creating a "Who am I? Riddle Book." Pupils write four or five statements about themselves. The last line is a question: "Who Am I?" Put this up on a bulletin board and have pupils guess who each person is. The first person to guess correctly gets to choose who guesses next.

Dumb Charades

Level: Primary

What to do: Ask the pupils to write lists of their hobbies. Go through the lists and put the children into groups with others who share one of their interests. First, the pupils must work out what they have in common with their group. They can then present the hobby as a charade and the rest of the class can guess what it is.

Welcome Poster

Level: Secondary

What to do: Make a welcome poster to stick on your classroom door. Invite the students to all write the word 'welcome' and decorate it with a hand print or portrait. They can help you make sure that every language spoken by members of the class be included.

Questionnaire

Level: Secondary

What to do: Have students complete a brief questionnaire identifying their likes, dislikes, interests, favourite subjects, favourite hobbies, etc. Students can then be placed into groups where they share common interests. Remember that your students are individuals with their own "story". Take the time to find out about their story, and show interest when talking with each one.

Passport Please!

Level: Secondary

What to do: Ask each student to create their own passport containing information about themselves. This should include a description of what they look like, their date of birth, where they were born, family details, hobbies, interests and pets. They could bring in a photograph from home, draw their own portrait or take photographs of each other.



Welcome Assembly

The start of the school year can bring many uncertain changes: new children starting school for the first time, others moving up a year, new staff members joining. So make the start of term a special time for welcoming both old faces and new ones and re-affirming the ties between groups and individuals. Always work to promote the sense of a whole-school community. Here is one idea of how to hold a welcome assembly for your school to get things off to a good start.

You will need: Seven large pieces of card, each card having one letter - C, E, E, L, M, W, O.

What to do: Hold up any of the cards and ask: 'Who has a name that begins with this letter?' Choose a child to come up and hold the card. Continue until all the letter cards are taken. Then look at the line of cards, scratch your head and state that you can't seem to make any sense of the letter string. Rearrange the children to make another nonsense word. Try to sound it out. When you have got the children's attention and have them trying to figure out the word, you can arrange it into the word WELCOME.

Ask children if anyone can help explain why you made that particular word? Take the opportunity to welcome everyone back to school - say how glad you are to see them all and how much you are looking forward to the new term. Tell them that when we say 'welcome,' we are saying that we are very pleased to meet someone and that we are happy in his or her company.

Inform them that welcome is a helpful word too. When someone says 'Can I borrow your felt pen? We can answer 'You are welcome,' which means, 'I like you and I trust you, so of course you can'.

A welcome face has a very special look that tells us that someone is glad to see us. Tell them: 'I am going to turn my back for a moment and, when I face you again, you have to say 'Yes' or 'No' depending on whether my face is welcoming or not welcoming.'

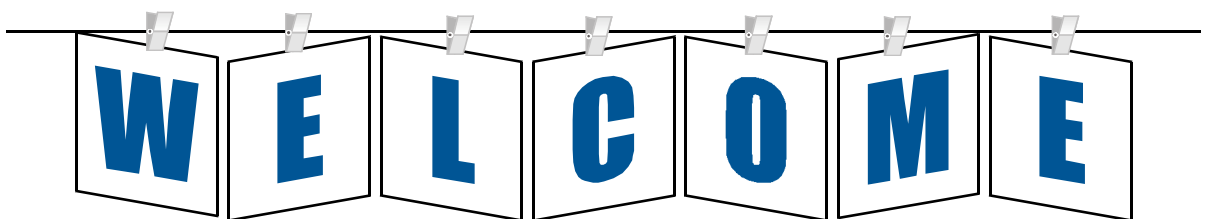
Turn around with a cross face and then again with a welcoming, smiling face.

Ask the children which face they liked best? Tell them that classrooms can be welcoming too, and that everyone in the school should feel happy and welcome in class. Invite some ideas about how we can have classrooms where everyone feels welcome and happy.

Take suggestions from the floor.

Tell children that they have made an excellent list of things that can be done to make our classrooms feel really welcoming. State that it is so good that you will get it typed so that everyone can have a copy for their classroom wall.

Conclude by telling the children that people like to feel welcome. That it makes us feel warm and happy and wanted. Explain that we can show that we are welcoming with our expression and the way that we move and the way we speak. We can say 'you are welcome' and make other people smile. We can make our rooms welcoming so that people feel relaxed and happy as they come through the door. End by encouraging everyone to welcome each other back to school today and help make everyday a happy 'you're welcome' day.



Classroom Treasure Hunt

Name: _____

Date: _____

Go on a treasure hunt around your new classroom with a friend. Write down the answers to the questions or draw what you find. Can you complete the sheet within 20 minutes?

Find something that is red

Find something made of wood

Find something that is square

Find something made of metal

Find something that has six sides

Find a book that has four words in the title

Find three things that begin with "D"

Find a book written by someone with a "T" in their name

Find something that has wheels

How many windows are there in your classroom?

Find something that is bigger than you

Find something that is shorter than your little finger

Who's Who?

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Fill in the blanks with names of your classmates.
Try to use each person's name only once on your sheet.*

_____ has the same favourite colour as I do.

_____ 's favourite sport is football.

_____ has 2 siblings.

_____ 's favourite food is _____ .

_____ likes to cook.

_____ went on vacation outside Karachi this summer.

_____ has been to Mohatta Palace.

_____ has a pet at home.

_____ 's birthday is in July.

_____ 's name starts with the same letter as my name.

_____ goes grocery shopping with his / her parents.

_____ likes to read.

_____ 's father has a mustache.

_____ wants to be a _____ when he / she is older.

_____ 's grandmother lives with the family.

_____ 's favourite movie is _____ .

_____ 's favourite subject is maths.

_____ 's birthday is in September.

Inclusive Education

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is really about practical changes that we can make so that children with diverse backgrounds and abilities, as well as all other children, can succeed in our classrooms and schools. These changes will not merely benefit the children we often single out as having special needs, but all children and their parents, all teachers and school administrators, and everyone from the community who works with the school.

What is “INCLUSIVE”?

Over the years, the term inclusive has come to mean “including children with disabilities” in “regular” classrooms for children without disabilities.

Inclusive includes children with disabilities such as children who have difficulties in seeing or hearing, who can not walk, or who are slower to learn. However inclusive also means including ALL children who are left out or excluded from school. These children may not speak the language of the classroom; are at risk of dropping out because they are sick, are hungry or not achieving well; or they belong to a different religion or caste. They also may be girls and boys who should be in school but are not, especially those who work



at home, in the fields or elsewhere and who have paying jobs to help their families survive. Inclusive means that as teachers, we have the responsibility to seek out all available support (from school authorities, the community, families, children, educational institutions, health services, community leaders and so on) for finding and teaching ALL children.

As teachers, we are responsible for creating a learning environment where ALL children can learn, ALL children want to learn and ALL children feel included in our classrooms and schools.

Inclusive Education

- acknowledges that all children can learn and that all need some form of support in learning;
- aims to uncover and minimise barriers to learning;
- is broader than formal schooling and includes the home, the community and other opportunities for education outside of schools;
- is about changing attitudes, behaviours, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all children;
- is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving according to local cultures and contexts, and is part of the wider strategy to promote an inclusive society.

Responding to Diversity

Nine Golden Rules

The nine golden rules deal with the diversity found among any class of children, but especially if some of the children have special needs. Teachers around the world have found them useful. And the pupils learn more. They are:

1. Include all pupils
2. Communicate
3. Manage the classroom
4. Plan your lessons
5. Plan for Individuals
6. Give individual help
7. Use assistive aids
8. Manage behaviour
9. Work together

1. Including Everyone

The value of inclusive education to learners comes from mixing and sharing with other children.

Teachers need to encourage this to happen as experience suggests that children with special needs can become isolated within classes and schools.



- Teachers may need to explain to other children the reasons why some children cannot talk, behave differently and so on. Diversity should be recognised and respected. Let the pupils discover for themselves how they work together with their peers. Similar work may need to be done at parent-teacher meetings.
- The biggest obstacle to inclusion is usually negative attitudes. Children may not be accustomed to other children who look and behave differently. Parents may also be worried about 'lowering the standards' if children with disabilities and other special needs are included in ordinary classrooms. Teachers are instrumental in developing positive attitudes among pupils, parents and of course other teachers.
- Children who use assistive devices such as hearing aids or depend on special equipment can tell the class about it and demonstrate its use.
- Encourage children to 'befriend' pupils with special needs. It is important for social inclusion that children play and work together. They can also assist them at toilets; moving between classroom and at break times.
- Within the class, develop opportunities for 'peer tutoring'. More able students can assist the less able in class-work. Also make sure that children with special needs can also make their meaningful contribution in school-work so that they do not become dependent and objects of 'help'.
- Devise learning games that children can play together in class. Groups of children can play these to help them master reading and number skills.
- Set the class activities to complete as a group; so that all the students contribute to its completion and gain credit for achieving it.
- Think of how children with special needs can join in games and sports. For example, a blind child can be partnered with a sighted child in running competitions. Or create a game in which all children move around blindfolded.
- Promote the talents of all children by encouraging their participation in school activities, such as singing, dancing and drama.
- Involve all children in school activities; for example in cleaning and cooking chores and as class monitors. It's a good sign when you see children playing happily together at break times and if they tell you about visiting each other at home.

Source:

Adapted from:

Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers. UNESCO: 2001



Effective Field Trips

Field trips can be a fun and rewarding means of active, integrated learning for your students, but they can also seem daunting and labour intensive. It is true, field trips can be a lot of work, before, during, and after the trip, but a well-planned excursion is well worth the effort.

For many of us, the term “field trip” may dredge up childhood memories of boring class visits to museums, industries or the zoo. It’s easy to get trapped into thinking about field trips in the same old way. But with a little imagination, a small excursion can be an exciting learning experience for your students. A field trip should be seen as any learning activity that is carried out by the children as a group outside of the classroom. It might be an



excursion to a distant location or simply moving from the classroom to a park near the school. No matter what location you choose, a field trip is a valuable learning tool. It can be used as an

introduction to a unit of instruction, to supplement the learning within a unit, or as a culminating activity at the end of a unit. A field trip can help children see more clearly how the content they have learned applies to their environment. Being able to contextualize and visualize their studies helps students realize that what they learn actually applies outside the classroom. Real life experiences have more impact, and many activities cannot be carried out in the classroom.

Where to Visit

Keep a file of community resources. Make a detailed list of the resources available in your community that can be used for field trips. Keep an open mind; you might be surprised at the diverse experiences available in your community. Think about your list, and how different locations might apply to different units of study. Remember that a field trip can be made any time during the academic year, but the most effective time is generally during the middle part of a unit of study.

Before the Trip

Field trips involve quite a bit of careful advanced planning, but you should not be intimidated. The most important aspect to begin with is planning how the trip will fit into your plan of study. Think about activities that the students will undertake. Make sure that the excursion is an activity based experience. Students will retain much more if they

feel they are learning on their own, rather than being lectured. It is always a wise idea to try to visit the location yourself in advance. That way, you can familiarize yourself with the location, and also better decide what sort of learning activities will work best in the situation.

Of course, there are also many administrative details that are very important. Your plans must, by necessity, be discussed with the principal or school head, and permission from parents and guardians must be obtained in advance. You will need to draft a letter home with all the important details. You can also use this occasion to ask for any parental volunteers to help with supervision. As a rule, there should be at least one adult supervisor for every ten children. Finally, you must insure that transportation is arranged, and any fees are collected.

As the day approaches, be sure to share the plans with the students. Discuss the details of the trip, its purpose, and how it fits with what they have studied. Hold a discussion on what everyone should bring, and what should be worn. In a positive way, establish the rules of behaviour for the trip, and any pertinent safety issues.



During the Trip

In some ways, the actual day of the trip may be the easiest part, because all your planning was done in advance. Most of your energy will be taken with supervision and regulating activities. You should be well aware of your students at all times. Frequent head counts are a wise precaution, and if groups

are working on their own, make sure they have times assigned for reporting back. Make sure that students stay on task, as a new environment can often be distracting. Supervise whatever cooperative learning tasks you have assigned, but be flexible and ready to change something, if it doesn't seem to be working. You might want to try various group sizes for different activities, and allow students to help record the event by taking photographs, notes, or using a tape-recorder.

After the Field Trip

Once the trip is over, arrange time for debriefing and discussion of the excursion. It is important to make sure this is done so that the field trip makes a lasting impression. Evaluate fieldwork by asking children what they gained from the trip. Give children plenty of opportunities to reflect on their experiences, and have questions ready to ask them.

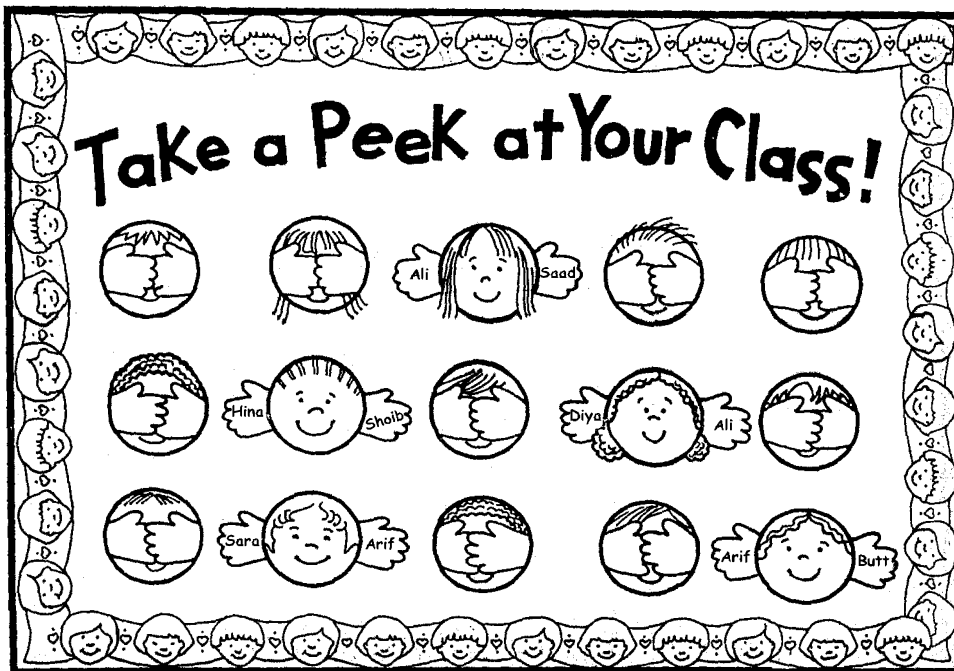
Discuss what went well and what did not. Gather suggestions for activities for future visits, this can be valuable information for you, if you plan to take a class to the same location in another year.

Follow up activities should be done as soon as possible; however, do not have a test based on the trip. A test will spoil their interest in any future trips. Allow adequate time and materials for follow up plans and projects. Learning through field trips is part of an integrated curriculum, and isolated experiences are easily forgotten. Follow up activities will establish understanding. One of your activities should be preparing thank-you letters to those who made the trip possible. Think about whether a large group card or individual letters would be better. Other activities might include students recording their experiences in their journals, or preparing oral reports for the class, or others, based on what was learned. You could also work together to create an attractive display board summarizing the experience.

Bulletin Board Ideas

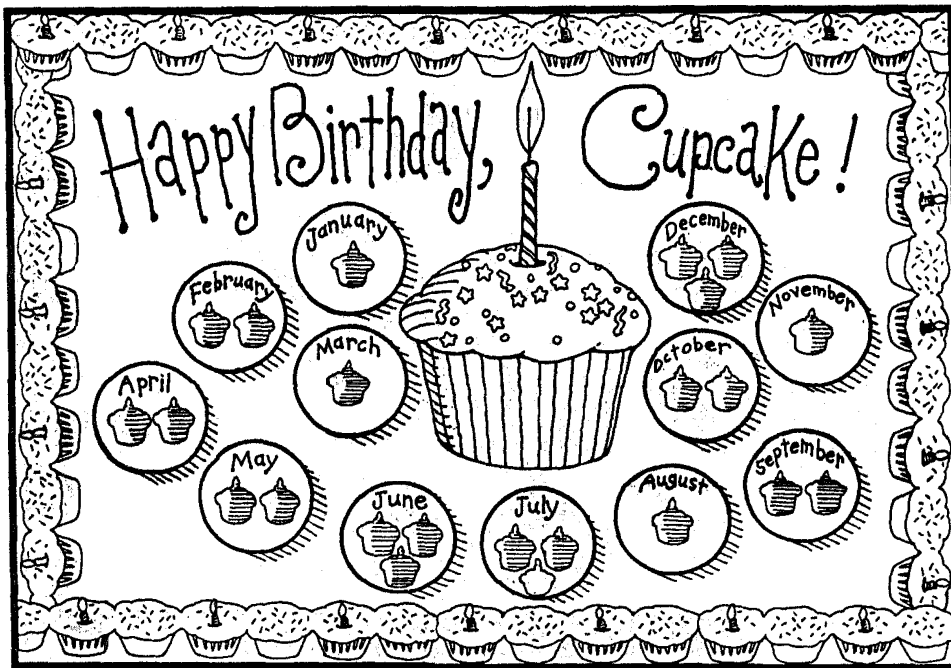
Here are some bulletin board ideas you can use for inspiration to decorate your classroom for the new term. Use these examples and descriptions to get started, but be creative and add your own personal touches as well. Try some of the following ideas to make your bulletin boards attractive and exciting:

- Enlarge designs using transparencies and an overhead projector for easy tracing of large objects.
- Stuff large images for a 3-D effect, or glue on tissue-paper squares for texture.
- Enhance large images with 3-D embellishments, such as glitter, plastic flowers or yarn.
- Fold, shape, weave, and crinkle butcher paper images and backgrounds to give your boards realistic, eye-catching effects.
- For interesting backgrounds, use fabric, corrugated paper, or newspaper.
- Experiment with painting and colouring techniques on large images and backgrounds. Paint splattering, finger-painting and sponge painting add interesting looks.
- A matching border will help hide any uneven background edges.
- Don't throw everything away! Carefully disassemble your display and file all the pieces away for next year.



Materials:
Paper Plates
Art Supplies
Card Paper

Have each child decorate a paper plate to represent his or her face. Invite students to trace their hands onto card paper and cut out the handprints. Ask each student to write his or her first name on the inside of the right hand and his or her last name on the inside of the left hand. Ask students to glue each hand to a side of the paper-plate face. Staple the faces to the bulletin board and fold in the hands so they cover the faces. Add the title "Take a Peek at Your Class!" Invite students to visit the board and open the hands to see their classmates.



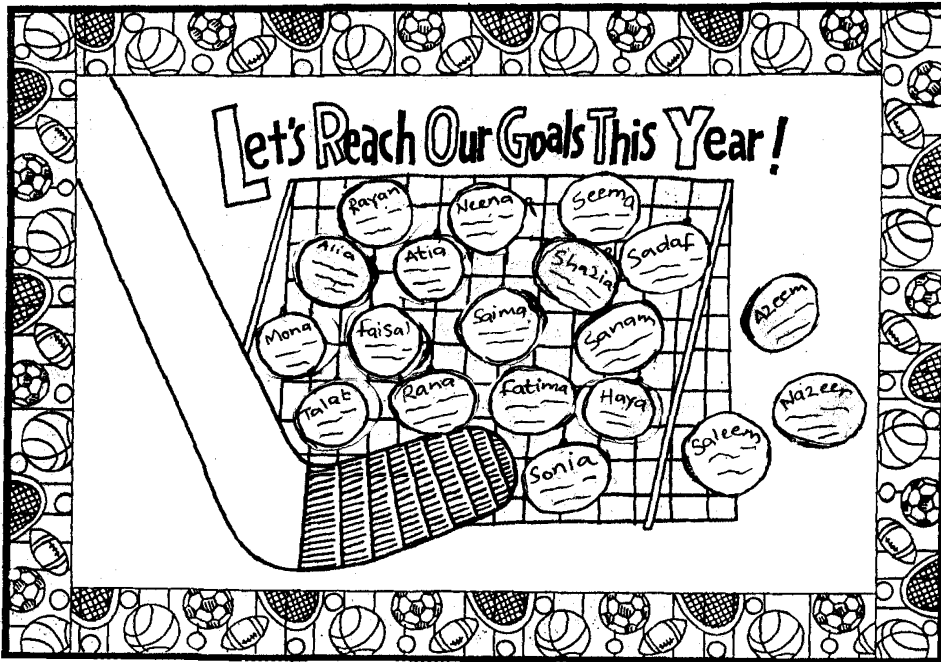
Materials:
 Card Paper
 Paper Plates
 Paper Cupcake
 Cut-Outs

Make a "giant cupcake" out of card paper. Add a card-paper "candle" to the top of the cupcake and attach it to a bulletin board titled "Happy Birthday, Cupcake!" Attach twelve paper plates around the cupcake. Label each plate with a month of the year. Write student's names on paper cupcake cut outs (older students can make their own cupcakes) and place each cut-out in the tray or pie tin that shows the month in which the student was born.



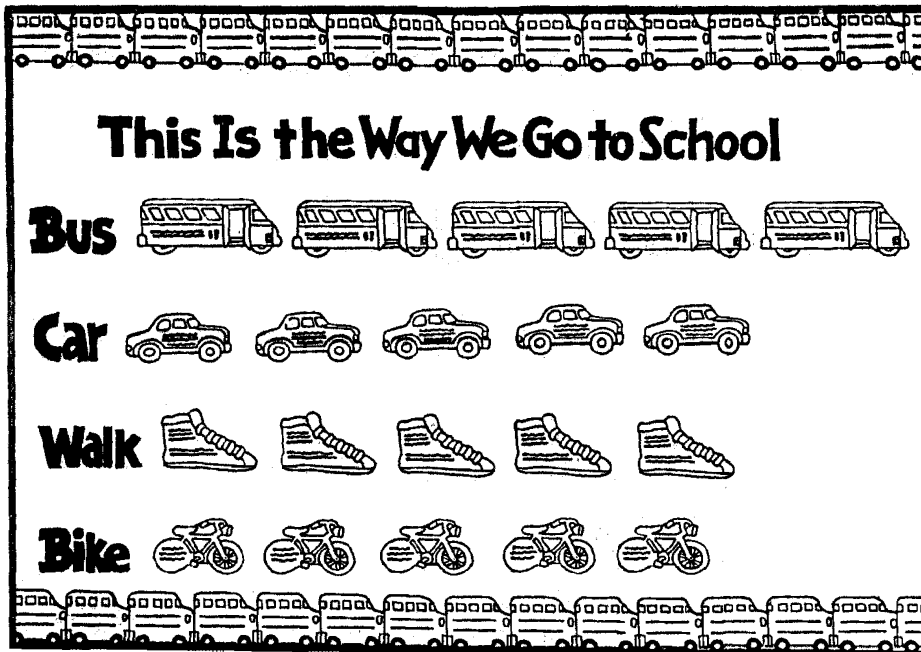
Materials:
 Octopus Cut-Out
 Clams
 Plastic Fishbowl

Enlarge, trace, colour and cut out the Octopus. Choose eight student helper jobs and write each on the leg of the octopus. Staple the octopus to the centre of a bulletin board titled "Helping Hands!" Reproduce a clam for each student, write a student's name on each clam, and cut out the clams. Put the clams in a plastic fishbowl that has been placed near the bulletin board. Choose eight clams each week and staple each clam to a different leg of the octopus to indicate student helpers.



Materials:
 Fishing Net
 Black Card Paper
 Chalk
 Paper Clips

Staple a square of fishing net to the center of a bulletin board. Draw "posts" from the net so it looks like a hockey net. Invite each student to cut out a "hockey ball" from black construction paper and write with chalk a goal he or she has for the year. Attach the balls to the net with paper clips. Add the heading "Let's Reach Our Goals This Year!"



Materials:
 Bus, Car, Shoe
 and Bike Cut-Outs

Divide a bulletin board into four horizontal sections. Label the first section "Bus", the second "Car", the third "Walk", and the fourth "Bike". Add the heading "This is the Way We Go to School". Ask students to decide how they usually go to school and colour and cut out a Bus, Car, Shoe or Bike to match their choice. Have students decorate their selection and write their name on it. Invite students to attach their cut-outs to the board in the appropriate row.

Source: Albright, P. (1999). *The Giant Book of Bulletin Boards*.